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Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
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Item 11 of the provisional agenda*
Examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit and of its utilization and applications, including, inter alia, in the field of space communications, as well as other questions relating to developments in space communications, taking particular account of the needs and interests of developing countries

Status of work on electromagnetic interference and radio astronomy

Information submitted by the secretariat of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

At their meeting in June 1999, the ministers of science of the member States of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) recognized that the future of radio astronomy would be strongly affected by electromagnetic emissions from low-orbiting telecommunications satellites. They agreed on the need for innovative measures to protect that fascinating field of scientific research while allowing for the vigorous growth of the communications industry. They endorsed a plan to bring together leaders in the domains of industry, science and regulation, in order to engage in constructive, informal discussions that could produce new guidelines, principles and proposals that, in turn, could be followed up by the appropriate technical, legal and regulatory bodies. Following the ministerial meeting, the OECD secretariat began working with the delegations of member States to establish a task force on radio astronomy and the radio spectrum. That work is essentially complete, and OECD will soon announce the creation of the task force, which is to hold its first meeting during the first quarter of 2001. The task force will define the scope of its work and develop a time line and work plan based on the types of outcome that it will try to achieve.

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